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Africa Review

22 September 1978

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AFRICA REVIEW

22 September 1978

CONTENTS

South Africa: Vorster Resigns, Announces Shift in Namibia Policy 1

The Prime Minister has stepped down for reasons of health, opening the way for a fierce intra-party battle for the office. Whoever comes to office will have to patch up relations with the outside world as a result of Vorster's parting decision to proceed unilaterally with a program for Namibian independence.

South Africa: Exile of Blacks from the Cape 5

The South African Government is determined to force the families of black workers out of the western part of Cape Province as part of its effort to create a secure white homeland in the area.

Rhodesia: Smith Under Fire. 8

Smith can probably weather the current widespread domestic criticism and is trying to do the minimum possible to appease white opinion while hoping that a calmer atmosphere will develop to allow him further opportunities to seek a negotiated settlement.

UK-Rhodesia: Charges of Sanction-Busting. 13

The political fallout from the release of a report on British oil company violations of UN sanctions against trade with Rhodesia is expected to be minimal because both the Labor and Conservative parties were in office when the infractions occurred and African leaders already suspected that violations were being ignored.

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President Senghor, who may soon retire, moved earlier this week against dissidents in his party who hope to block his designated constitutional successor, Prime Minister Diouf, from taking office.

Mauritius: Deepening Labor Party Rift 17

Prime Minister Ramgoolam is confronted by an increasingly serious challenge from reform-minded dissidents in his Labor Party and an uneasy narrowly based coalition, and he could fall from power if he does not make compromises.

FOR THE RECORD 21

25X1A

South Africa: Vorster Resigns, Announces Shift
in Namibia Policy

Prime Minister Vorster announced his resignation for health reasons on Wednesday and indicated that he would be willing to step up to the presidency. Vorster's successor as Prime Minister will be chosen next Thursday by the ruling National Party parliamentary caucus. The caucus--175 members of parliament and the senate--will elect the new President the following day.

The announcement of Vorster's resignation has sparked a fierce battle for the premiership within the party leadership. The Prime Minister, during his 12 years of rule, never singled out a successor, and there is no way of knowing how much political weight he will be willing to wield in behalf of any of the major contenders during the next week. Vorster, in true Afrikaner tradition, has ruled by compromise and consensus, and he may expect the party caucus to pick a leader who can control the country in the same manner.

The way in which Vorster views his role as President will affect his behind-the-scenes maneuvering in helping choose a successor. If a proposed new constitution allowing limited power sharing with Coloreds and Asians--but not blacks--is put into effect within the next two years as the government hopes, the presidency could evolve into a strong executive institution. In such a case, Vorster may well want a Prime Minister whose views are compatible with his own.

There are four front-runners for the National Party leadership. Although they differ in style and some have stronger views on foreign policy than others, none would change the existing party policy of separate political development for blacks and whites. The electorate is basically conservative, and even Vorster, with the massive political mandate he won in last year's election,

22 September 1978

believed he could not institute change without risking a split in the party. The next South African Prime Minister will, at least for the foreseeable future, find it necessary to continue to run the country by consensus.

Minister of Defense P. W. Botha is an astute politician with a reputation for unpredictability. An older conservative, he favors a strong defense force, tough internal security laws, and national self-sufficiency in the face of external pressures. Botha has taken a firm stand on Rhodesia and has advocated retaliatory raids on neighboring states harboring anti - South African guerrillas. He has also led the battle in the cabinet against acceptance of the UN plan for a settlement in Namibia. As leader of the Cape Province branch of the National Party, Botha has a strong political base.

Minister of Plural Relations and Development Connie Mulder heads the largest of the four provincial parties that make up the National Party. Mulder had been considered heir apparent to Vorster until a recent financial scandal in his ministry damaged his political standing. Mulder, whose ministry controls almost every aspect of black life in South Africa, is a conservative who has nevertheless been able to put a slightly more acceptable face on South African racial policy without effecting any real changes. As Prime Minister, Mulder could deal with some of the older, more conservative blacks in South Africa, although he does not appear to have any rapport with the younger members of the black community. Mulder is a pragmatist on international issues and could initiate dialogue with Western and moderate African governments.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Roelof ("Pik") Botha is an experienced diplomat who served as Ambassador to the US. He has had no domestic political experience and has no party base, but appears to have a more flexible approach to racial matters than most other Afrikaner politicians. As Prime Minister, Botha might risk introducing some reforms, although not in the area of genuine political rights for blacks. Botha has been a longtime advocate of a peaceful settlement in Namibia, but he may have lost political ground during the latest cabinet wrangle over the UN proposals for Namibia. Botha has

22 September 1978

been considered a Vorster protege, and he is personally popular with whites who see him as a tough, articulate defender of South Africa able to deal with the outside world.

Namibian Policy Shift

On Wednesday Vorster also gave the press a detailed position paper on Namibia that strongly implies that the cabinet has given up hope of reaching agreement with UN Secretary General Waldheim and therefore has decided to proceed unilaterally on a program leading to independence. Vorster argues that South Africa holds to its acceptance of the Western settlement proposal, but will not accept certain "deviations" appearing in Waldheim's recommendations for implementing the Western plan. He singled out Waldheim's recommendations for a UN peace-keeping force of 7,500 men, for a UN police component of 360 men to monitor the South African police, and for holding a Namibian election seven months after the UN Security Council decides to go ahead with a settlement program.

In fact, the Western plan proposed that the Secretary General set the size of the UN military force, that the UN civil staff monitor the South African police, and that a seven-month preparatory period precede an election. The Western proposal also set a target date for independence of 31 December 1978. This would have been consistent with the seven-month interval if the Security Council had adopted the Western proposal when it was accepted by South Africa last April. The SWAPO leaders, however, did not accept the proposal until July, and Vorster has argued that Waldheim's opting for the seven-month preparatory period shows his partiality for SWAPO.

Vorster told the press on Wednesday that the cabinet had not set a date for a Namibian election, but had authorized the Administrator General for Namibia to do so. Subsequently, the Administrator General announced that an election will be held on 20-24 November. Such an early election date is unacceptable to the UN Security Council because it does not allow time for other Namibian political groups to compete on an even footing with the group favored by South Africa. Pretoria's move--very likely at Vorster's behest--may be intended

22 September 1978

to secure a position for hard bargaining at the UN and to reassure South African hardliners that no concessions will be made until Vorster's successor takes command. The hardliners might countenance a later election date, set by Vorster's successor, in return for other revisions in Waldheim's recommendations.

The non-Western members of the Security Council are unlikely to go along with a postponement of a session on Namibia until after Vorster's successor is chosen. South Africa's unilateral setting of an election date may provoke the non-Western Security Council members to back SWAPO's demands for changes in the settlement plan that would be unacceptable even to South African moderates. (CONFIDENTIAL)

22 September 1978

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South Africa: Exile of Blacks From the Cape

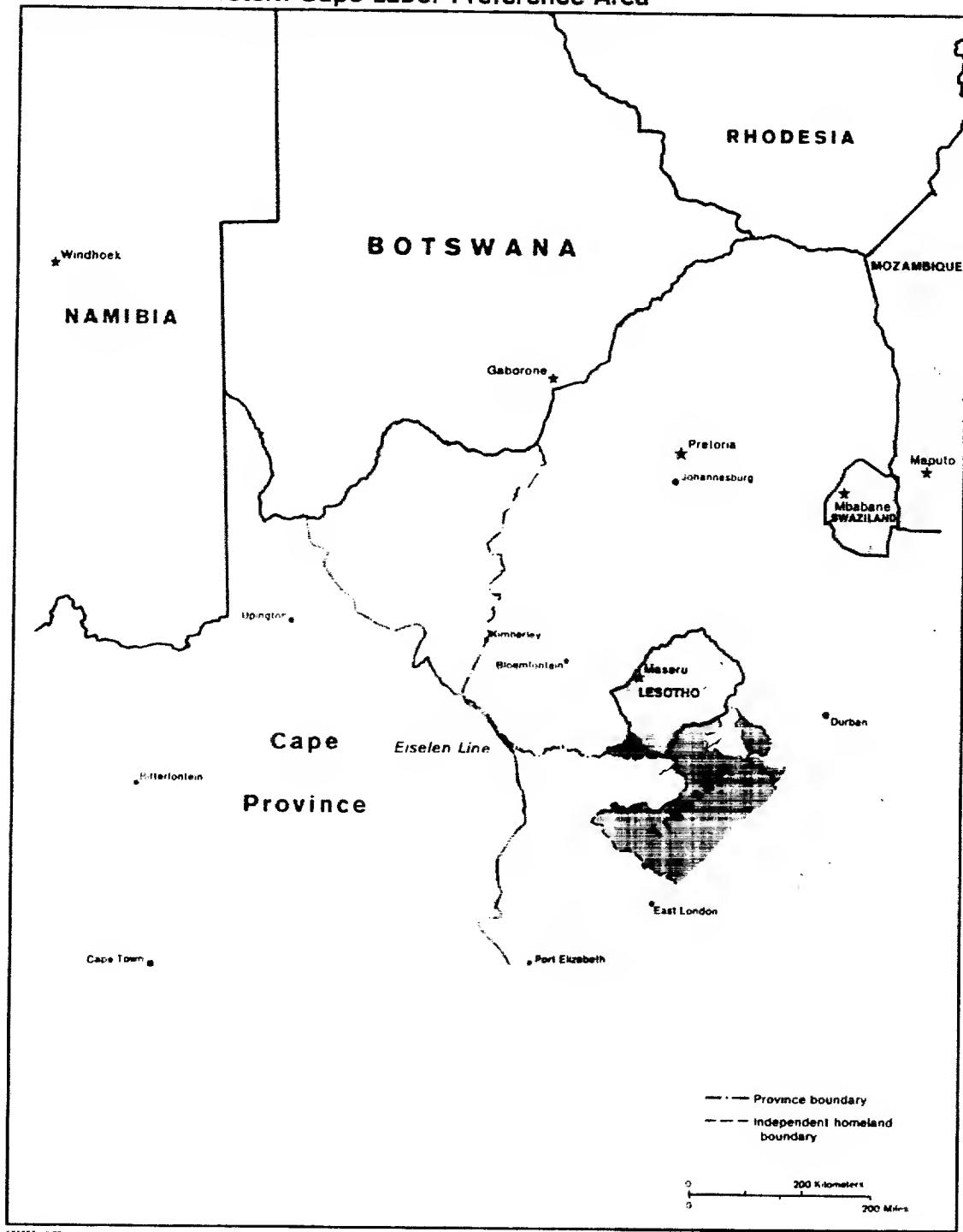
The impending demolition of Crossroads, the black squatter town of 20,000 people on the outskirts of Cape Town, illustrates the determination of the South African Government to force the families of black workers out of the western part of Cape Province. At its annual congress late last month, the Cape branch of the ruling National Party reaffirmed both its hardline policy toward blacks and its determination to preserve the Cape as a permanent home solely for whites and Coloreds, the 2.5 million South Africans of mixed blood who are concentrated there.

In 1955, the government drew a north-south boundary, the Eiselen Line, through Cape Province and set off the western third of the country as an area in which Coloreds have employment and housing privileges not given to blacks--although far fewer than those accorded to whites. The government decided at that time that it would gradually remove all black laborers from western Cape Province and relocate them in nearby black homelands. Ten years later the government proclaimed a 5-percent annual reduction in the number of blacks allowed to work in the area and put a moratorium on the construction of new housing for black families.

The government did not, however, foresee the industrial boom and economic expansion of the late 1960s, which made black labor more essential than ever. Since the Eiselen Line was drawn, the number of blacks legally in the area has doubled to about 360,000, and there may be an equal number there illegally. Despite this increase, the ban on legal family housing remained in force. Squatter towns mushroomed, and the government is now systematically eliminating them and ousting dependents--in part to forestall disorders such as those spearheaded in the past two years by young blacks living in the townships.

22 September 1978

South Africa: Western Cape Labor Preference Area



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22 September 1978

Despite some muttering from Afrikaner intellectuals about the need for a better deal for blacks, the provincial party congress last month voted unanimously to tighten controls on the influx of blacks and make black labor more expensive for the employer. The congress ruled out any prospect that urban blacks west of the Eiselen Line might be allowed to hold property leases, an innovation introduced elsewhere in the country in an effort to stabilize some of the urban population.

The hardline tone of the congress was set by Minister of Defense P. W. Botha, the Cape Province party leader and one of the contenders for the premiership now that Prime Minister Vorster has announced his resignation from office. Minister of Plural Relations and Development Connie Mulder, one of Botha's political rivals, jumped on the bandwagon and took a strong stand against a black labor force with permanent residence rights in the province. Mulder, whose department controls nearly every aspect of black life in South Africa, promised to remove Crossroads, the last of the Cape's major black squatter communities, despite protests from many Cape Town whites.

The congress also completely ruled out the possibility of political rights for blacks. The government, however, is still considering proposals to give a limited political franchise to Coloreds. Afrikaners in the Cape obviously believe they can coexist with the Colored community, which observes white mores while remaining subservient to white domination.

The Eiselen Line is one of the boundaries that is often cited in speculation about the possibility of a federated system--or even of partition in the long-term South African future. The Cape National Party has shown, by its determination to remove as many blacks as possible, that it intends to continue to mold the area west of the line into a white homeland that could remain intact whatever the future holds for South Africa. (CONFIDENTIAL)

22 September 1978

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Rhodesia: Smith Under Fire

Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith is facing the most widespread domestic attacks on his policies since Rhodesia's whites unilaterally declared independence from the UK in 1965. Following the shootdown of a Rhodesian airliner by Zimbabwe African People's Union guerrillas earlier this month, rightwing spokesmen have become increasingly vocal in attacking Smith for lack of leadership and calling for more vigorous military efforts. Most of Smith's senior military advisers, however, are still pressing for a negotiated settlement, although the internal settlement is faltering badly and prospects are dim for holding new talks with ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo or convening an all-parties conference in the near future. Smith can probably weather the criticism and is trying to do the minimum possible to appease white opinion while hoping that a calmer atmosphere will develop that will allow him to look for further opportunities to pursue a negotiated settlement.

Whites have reacted emotionally to the airliner disaster, and rightwing politicians have attracted increased support by calling for strong measures, including retaliation against ZAPU forces in Zambia. Smith responded by announcing that limited martial law measures would be implemented, and the government reimposed bans on the internal political wings of ZAPU and the Zimbabwe African National Union and arrested most of ZAPU's internal officials. Smith is apparently resisting pressure for a large-scale strike into Zambia.

Many whites were disappointed by Smith's announcement, but are thus far not calling for his resignation. Rightwingers continue to exploit the situation by criticizing Smith's "weak" response, however, and some moderate politicians are complaining that he did not advance any new ideas on a settlement.

22 September 1978

Most Rhodesian military commanders opposed the imposition of martial law, [REDACTED]

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25X1C [REDACTED] At a meeting between Smith and the commanders before Smith's announcement, the military leaders asserted that there were no military advantages to martial law and that disillusionment among whites would only increase because they would expect results that the security forces could not deliver. As they have in the past, the commanders urged Smith to seek a negotiated settlement because they believe the war cannot be won. General Walls, Rhodesia's senior military leader, stated that a partial mobilization would be required under martial law since he would need more troops, but Smith ruled out any call-up because it would wreck the economy.

In the end, the military leaders accepted Smith's contention that the limited declaration was necessary to alleviate white pressure. The commanders agreed to select only tribal areas where they could implement martial law measures without further straining their already thin resources, thereby leaving prosecution of the war essentially unchanged.

Settlement Efforts Stalled

Recent events have increasingly cast doubt on the viability of the internal settlement, as well as on whether Smith and his black partners will even try to carry it out in its present form. Smith stated publicly that the regime probably will not be able to hold elections in December as scheduled and that the settlement might have to be delayed. Even then guerrilla activity in many rural areas will make it impossible to hold an election in some parts of the countryside.

Moreover, the positions of the major internal black leaders, Bishop Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole, continue to erode. The two men publicly disclosed Smith's recent secret meeting with ZAPU leader Nkomo in order to forestall being cut out of a settlement by a Smith-Nkomo deal. Neither is playing a significant role in important policy decisions, and they do not appear to have had much, if any, say in Smith's decision regarding martial law. One or both might decide to leave the transitional government, but they lack armed strength of their own and,

22 September 1978

appear to have little option other than remaining with the internal settlement as their best chance for coming to power in a black government.

Smith now seems to have little confidence in Muzorewa and Sithole, in part because they have failed to persuade large numbers of guerrillas to defect under the government's amnesty program. Smith no doubt is also aware that Muzorewa, who has been considered the most popular Rhodesian black leader, is losing black support.

Smith had intensified his efforts to reach an agreement with Nkomo largely because of the internal settlement's declining fortunes. Now, however, the public disclosure of the secret meeting between Smith and Nkomo and the white reaction to the airliner incident have closed off the possibility of further direct contacts between the two men in the near future. Although Smith and Nkomo are taking a negative position toward further talks, they still could reconsider.

Prospects for early progress on the UK-US settlement initiative are also bleak. Although a spokesman for Robert Mugabe's ZANU has publicly differed with Nkomo by asserting that ZANU is still prepared to attend the proposed all-parties meeting, neither Patriotic Front leader seems in a hurry for such a meeting. They probably see Smith's martial law announcement as further evidence that his position is weakening and that time is on their side. Nkomo and Mugabe remain interested in settlement talks, however, because they believe that a military victory for their forces is not close.

Preserving white confidence in the future of Rhodesia continues to be Smith's major objective in pursuing a negotiated settlement. His announcement of limited martial law was designed to buy time and reduce criticism of the government, but he risks serious damage to white confidence and possible increasing white emigration if he does not take some further action soon.

Smith's Options

Some rightwing politicians would like Smith to make a "second unilateral declaration of independence" and

22 September 1978

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return Rhodesia to white rule, while at the same time staging heavier cross-border attacks on guerrilla forces in Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana. Smith almost certainly will not adopt such a course. He knows his military leaders are opposed to a tougher policy, and both he and the military leadership realize that an all-out military effort would not end the fighting.

Smith apparently will carry on with the internal settlement unless he sees an acceptable alternative. He realizes that he needs an accord with more than the internal leaders alone to achieve a viable settlement, but he probably will try to keep them in the government because he wants to include at least one of them in any settlement to balance against the more militant externally based nationalists.

If criticism from whites continues and Smith's support appears to be eroding, he might resign or at least threaten to do so. He has publicly expressed his desire to get out of politics. Despite his problems, however, no other white politician can come close to matching Smith's stature or experience. Many of his critics realize this and probably would not want him to go at this critical time.

Due to hardening white attitudes, Smith will be unable over the short term to push for new settlement talks, but he probably hopes that the current emotionally charged atmosphere in the white community will dissipate within a few weeks. Although Nkomo's public boasting over the Rhodesian airliner incident has, at least temporarily, made him as anathema to whites as Mugabe has been, Smith probably still believes Nkomo's strong support within the Ndebele tribe makes it vital that he be part of a settlement. Smith's resistance to pressure for a large-scale attack on ZAPU camps in Zambia suggests that he still hopes to deal with Nkomo and his principal backer, Zambian President Kaunda.

Because of the unlikelihood of further secret contacts with Nkomo, Smith may see the UK-US settlement initiative as the best hope for renewed talks. One of Smith's key advisers told UK and US officials last week

22 September 1978

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that they should "let the dust settle" for a few weeks before trying again to set up an all-parties meeting. Smith probably has concluded that Muzorewa and Sithole will have no choice but to attend despite their misgivings, and that he can gain white acquiescence for his attendance by arguing that the continuing insurgency makes it necessary to try once more to talk with the Patriotic Front through the UK and US. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

22 September 1978

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UK-Rhodesia: Charges of Sanction-Busting

The political fallout from the release on 19 September of the Bingham report--an inquiry into British oil company violations of UN sanctions against trade with Rhodesia--is expected to be minimal because both the Labor and Conservative Parties were in office when the infractions occurred. But the rhetoric--especially from Labor's left wing--is expected to be considerable and will continue at least through the debate scheduled for November on continuing adherence to the sanctions. Although African leaders probably will condemn the violations, the report should have little effect on British relations with Africa since most leaders already suspected that London was ignoring the violations.

According to press accounts of the commission's findings, oil has been reaching Rhodesia via both Mozambique and South Africa ever since sanctions were imposed in 1966. Elaborate systems of bonding were employed to obscure sources and destinations. During part of the time a swap arrangement with the French company Total was in effect to further hide the involvement of British companies. British Petroleum and Shell consistently asserted that they could not be held responsible for the activities of their southern African subsidiaries. Company assertions that sanctions were not being violated went unchallenged by the British Government until Foreign Secretary Owen commissioned Thomas Bingham 18 months ago to investigate compliance.

Hypocrisy in High Places

Press reports of the commission's findings put into question

The government has consistently defended sanctions, and indeed it has encouraged the prosecution of minor offenders. Moreover, substantial sums of money were spent to maintain a blockade of the Mozambican port of Beira to prevent oil from getting to the Rhodesian pipeline.

25X6

22 September 1978

Only a full investigation will show where the biggest gap was: whether embarrassing facts were kept from the directors of British Petroleum, especially from the two government-appointed directors; whether the government directors concealed facts from government ministers; or whether the ministers knew what was going on but chose not to act.

Impact on Domestic and Foreign Policy

There may be a bipartisan move to minimize the damage done by the release of the Bingham report. Moderate members of both parties believe that little can be gained from the revelations, except to reassure voters that nothing is being covered up. The left wing of the Labor Party will probably press the hardest for a full investigation.

What effect the scandal will have on the voting to renew sanctions is hard to predict. The Tories remain divided on the issue. The Tory right, strong supporters of the Smith-backed internal settlement, will try to break any momentum generated by the report for renewing the sanctions. While not condoning breaking the law, they may argue that lifting sanctions is the more realistic course to follow. The party leadership, however, supports the view of shadow Foreign Secretary Davies that the time is not yet ripe for the party to press the issue. In any case, the party must be unified and must win the support of the undecided smaller opposition parties to gain parliamentary approval for lifting sanctions.

It does not appear that this affair will have much impact on British relations with Rhodesia or the African Frontline states. The Patriotic Front and the Frontline Presidents will regard the report as a confirmation of their long-held suspicions that violations were occurring. Owen's credibility with the Africans could be enhanced if the report generates widespread publicity and his role as the official who commissioned it becomes well-known. So far Rhodesia's transitional government has not reacted publicly to the revelations, largely because other matters weigh more heavily. Sanctions or no, Rhodesia has been able to obtain oil, as various countries abetted by South Africa have demonstrated their willingness to do business with the white-dominated regime.
(CONFIDENTIAL NOFORN)

22 September 1978

SECRET

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Senegal: Succession Struggle

President Senghor, who may soon retire despite his recent public denial of ill health, moved earlier this week against dissidents in the ruling Socialist Party who hope to block his designated constitutional successor--Prime Minister Diouf--from taking office. Babacar Ba, Diouf's chief rival, was replaced as Foreign Minister and is now the object of other government-inspired measures intended to embarrass him politically. This will not eliminate the opposition Diouf faces and could stimulate greater restiveness as the political scene heats up.

Senghor, against doctor's orders, returned home last week from medical treatment in Europe--where he ostensibly was on vacation--to try to arrange for an orderly succession, [REDACTED] Senghor underwent treatment for cancer and that colleagues in his party believe the 72-year-old President wants to step down as soon as possible. Other [REDACTED] [REDACTED] while differing with regard to diagnosis, is consistent in stating that Senghor's illness is serious and that he wants to resign.

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The succession fight has begun in earnest, with the military in the position of being the final arbiter in case of a protracted succession squabble. Senghor clearly will resist pressure to revise the constitution to provide for a new presidential election in the event he steps down. Diouf's automatic succession is contested not only by elements in Senghor's party, but by minor opposition parties and top Army leaders.

Senghor's bid to bolster his dauphin probably will reinforce the view that Diouf is a self-effacing creature of the President who lacks a strong political base of his own and cannot claim a mandate to lead Senegal. Senghor will either have to rally greater support for Diouf or dump him for a figure who commands broad backing.

22 September 1978

SECRET

Ba, who apparently remains a party member, still is a powerful political figure and a potential challenger to Senghor's succession plan. We do not know how the Army views Ba's dismissal. Ba's civilian supporters are unhappy, but no demonstrations have materialized in Dakar. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

22 September 1978

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Mauritius: Deepening Labor Party Rift

Prime Minister Ramgoolam, already hampered by an aggressive opposition party and the need to maintain an uneasy coalition with a small parliamentary majority, is now confronted by an increasingly serious challenge from dissidents in his own Labor Party that could bring down his government. Ramgoolam's once tight grasp on Mauritian politics has weakened considerably in recent years, and the Prime Minister is attempting to reimpose party unity by threatening to resign and labeling the dissidents as Communist-inspired. Nonetheless, the dissidents have won considerable popular support and appear to be gaining momentum.

The dissident group, led by deputy party leader Harish Boodhoo, charges that corruption and cronyism are rampant in the Labor Party and is demanding economic and other reforms from the out-of-touch Ramgoolam. The mavericks proclaim their loyalty to the party and Ramgoolam and insist their sole object is to reform the party from within by purging deputies who no longer abide by traditional party principles. Nonetheless, the dissidents have implied that if their demands are not satisfied, they will bolt the party, resulting in the loss of the coalition's small majority and necessitating new elections that the Labor Party is likely to lose.

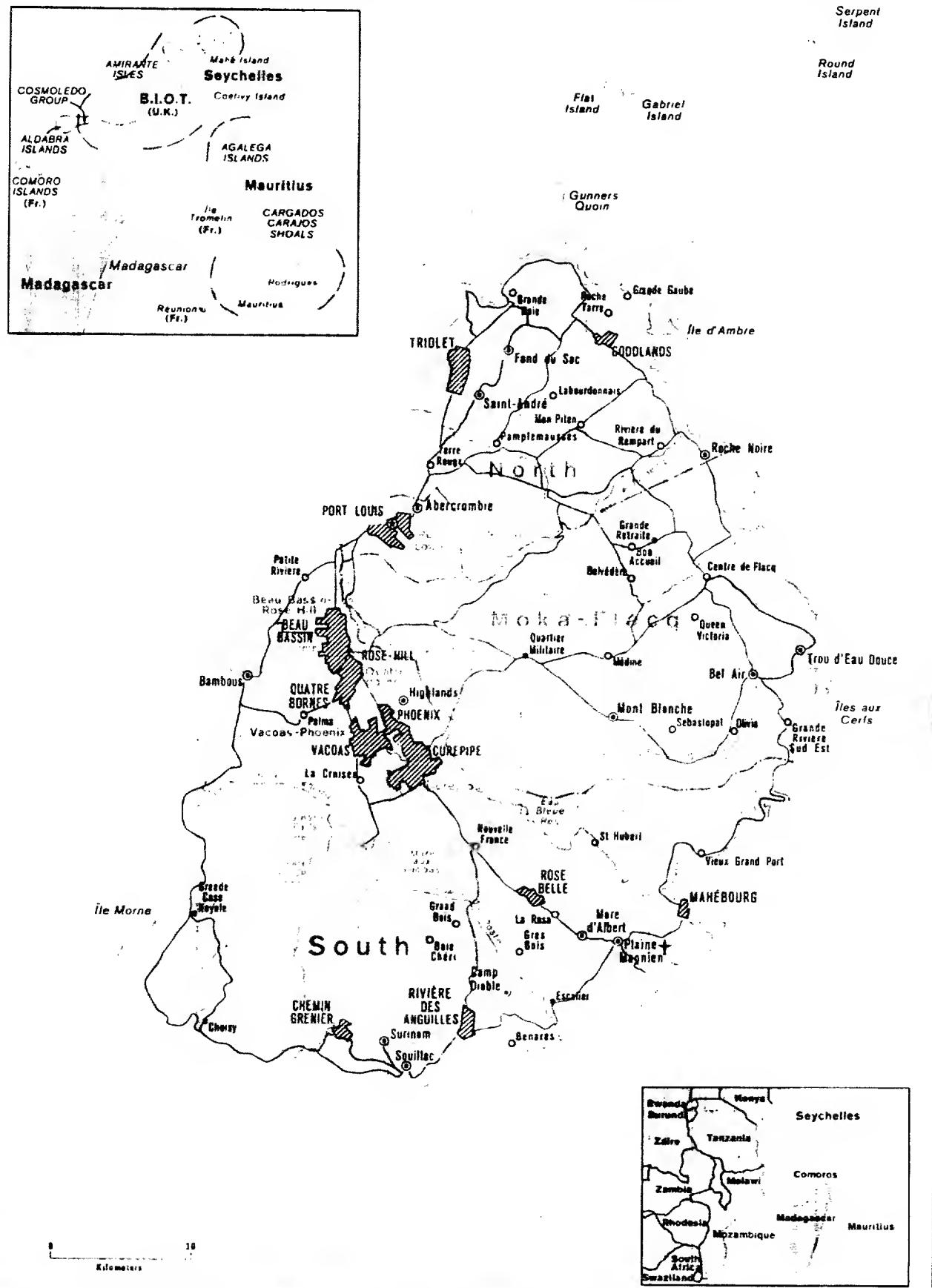
The Boodhoo group realizes that the tenacious Ramgoolam is unlikely to agree to all of its demands. As a result, the dissidents have decided to make their appeal public and have struck a responsive chord among many Mauritians.

They have enlisted the help of Agriculture Minister Sir Satcam Boolell, a high caste Hindu who is an important contender for Ramgoolam's position. The dissidents apparently see Boolell as a successor to Ramgoolam. Boolell would probably attract considerable support from the Hindu community--the country's largest ethnic group,

22 September 1978

SECRET

Mauritius SECRET
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which constitutes slightly more than half of the population--the private sector, civil servants, and the Mauritian Social Democratic Party--Labor's coalition partner. Boolell has been in contact with the Labor Party's opposition, the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM), and Ramgoolam believes that Boolell would be willing to make concessions to it. The MMM may be encouraged to deal with Boolell because, despite its impressive showing in elections in 1976 and 1977, it has recently suffered its own internal division, leaving it unable to exploit the Labor Party rift.

Ramgoolam's Retirement

There is little doubt that Ramgoolam is alarmed over the division of the Labor Party into an "old guard" faction supporting the Prime Minister and the Boodhoo group, which is gaining support from wavering deputies. Ramgoolam is using the threat of his early retirement and the resultant specter of a Labor Party fall from power to generate unity among the feuding party members. The 77-year-old Ramgoolam, who is in poor health, would probably like to retire from politics, but he will postpone his retirement until he is certain he can transfer power to his heir apparent, Finance Minister Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo--a capable administrator who would probably continue Ramgoolam's moderate policies and preserve Mauritius' multiparty democracy. Ringadoo leans slightly to the left, but is friendly to the US and is unlikely to form a coalition with the MMM. Ramgoolam will have a hard time, however, selling Ringadoo to the dissidents, who apparently regard Ringadoo as Ramgoolam's surrogate and not an acceptable successor.

Outlook

It is clear that Ramgoolam will have to suppress the dissidents or make some compromises to bring them back into the fold if he is to prevent a complete rupture of the Labor Party and avoid elections. Ramgoolam, who has survived numerous challenges during his 30 years in politics, may yet be able to come out on top with much of his authority intact. He is still widely respected and even revered and has considerable power in the party. He is increasingly on the defensive, however, and his opponents are likely to catch up with him eventually.

22 September 1978

In the meantime, the Boodhoo group may be frustrated enough by Ramgoolam's tenacity and his determination to place Ringadoo in control to consider an unconstitutional move. The dissidents, however, appear to lack the necessary support in the security apparatus for such a step, especially in light of Ramgoolam's efforts to tighten up security following the coup in the Seychelles last year. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT)

22 September 1978

FOR THE RECORD

GHANA: The 1979 budget announced by General Akuffo's government last week is a key feature of its economic stabilization program. The budget's austerity measures pose considerable political risks for the regime, and implementation will be a major test of its will. The budget is a prerequisite for obtaining large loans from the International Monetary Fund and Western donor countries that are needed to help resolve the massive economic problems inherited from the ousted Acheampong regime.

The budget is intended to reduce severe inflation by substantially narrowing deficit spending and holding expenditures close to this year's levels. It represents a major step toward an eventual balanced budget and a reversal of the previous trend toward ever larger deficits. At the same time, the budget doubles the price paid to producers of cocoa--the major foreign exchange earner. The government hopes this will discourage farmers from smuggling nearly a fourth of the crop to neighboring countries for better prices.

A 10-percent cost-of-living wage increase is planned for government workers. The government has also recommended that wage increases in the private sector be limited to 10 percent. Organized labor, confronted with a 150 percent jump in consumer prices in the past year and showing signs of growing restiveness, will doubtless react negatively to the wage guidelines. Widespread industrial unrest and new inflationary wage pacts clearly could threaten the government's plans to stabilize the economy. (CONFIDENTIAL) [REDACTED]

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22 September 1978

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